

# PERKINS PRESS

Volume II, Number IV

Late-summer issue 1991



**Inside:** pp finds B&C non-PC, the pp interview—RRR records, summer SANITY, reptile SKIN trade exposed, renrut gets SPIRITUAL, marvin leaves HELL to visit IRAQ. (fiction, poetry, art, photography, comics, streams of consciousness, and other.)



# VAGUEMAN Runkel eulogy

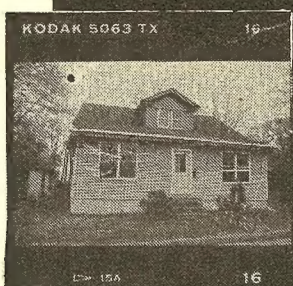


Sorta dead.

Perkins Press is an open forum hoping for contributions, including some news items on the local area. All poetry submissions are greatly appreciated, but we can not print everything immediately as we are more than just a poetry journal. We operate under the assumption that people in the Valley area actually read. If we are deluding ourselves it would be greatly appreciated if you could let us know. Submissions are appreciated in magnetic format. As in on IBM PC 5.25" disks or (preferably) 3.5" 800K Macintosh disks.

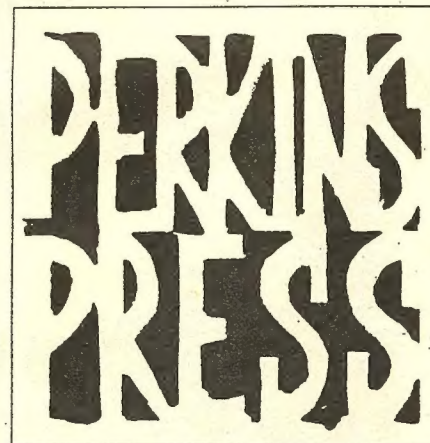
## ED NOTES:

To be short and to the point, there's the rub. Much more work and even some *letters* (proof: page 15) have arrived in response to the last issue. No hostility at all to said edition, only *kindness* and *interest* (or was it pity?), thus killing the possibility of snide remarks herein. No sadness to report neither, but for the news that *Vague*man, PP's embodiment of human angst, has ceased to exist and will no longer grace the ever more dribbly, desperate ed notes. *And*, this is very probably the last two month hiatus PP will ever take. We're a monthly, damnit.



## CONTRIBUTORS NOTES:

Jim Andrews "grew up in Manhattan, is responsible for many illegal murals in the local area and New York, represented by the Starving Artist Gallery on Newbury St. in Boston, has done covers for the *Valley Advocate* and is available for promo work at 586-8696." The man who knows how to use a contrib. column is responsible for this month's cover photo. Corwin Erixon, long-term PP graphic artist, with his first Perkins feature, giving you one more reason to avoid Bread & Circus, page 3, page 11 photo of local color in black & white, page 8 graphic work inspired by J.G. Ballard? Renrut, much loved for the Superbowl of Death in our last issue, strikes back by getting esoteric. He may also be familiar from old *Advocate's* and the famous, resting *OH NO NOHO*. A summer time quest that gets richer with every reading, page 4. Don Ogden, remembered for some words in March on the death of Greg Levey, makes a little sense out of summer and politics and the things in your head while Dondi Ahearn, famed Collegian Photo editor, dashing dude with a camera at the ready, compliments Mr. Ogden's words. They are related. It happens on page 5. John Grey is a poet hailing from Providence, RI. Beauty in verse, page 5. Pilar Sanjuan, a New Yorker who tried to live in the Valley for a while, is passionately involved in all things animal, especially their rights. In the day time she works the rock and roll accounting firm as a professional, by night a daredevil reporter, feature on reptile skin, page 6 Mr. Stick Figure Income, a silly name for a fine man who's given us some fine art work over the issues, interview with the founder of RRR records, page 6. Walt Franklin sent in a poem from page 6. Carlo Valone, the Press's most regular, and some say knowledgeable, political columnist, continues to define the true meaning of patriotism, page 7. Steve Paleri, responsible for Marvin the Maggot all these months, really was in Gidget Goes to Hell, currently plays with Sex Kitchen in between paintings. A graphic rendition of lives of the rich and famous, page 7. John Lefas, Northampton based poet, Perkins Press welcomes you back to town, poem, page 7. Leah Ryan, one of the few who can make PP seem worth it at those quiet times. An excellent dude, her fiction and comics have appeared regularly since March. Fiction, page 9, comic page 15. Gary



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Wortzel, Boston based artist, art page 9. Aimee Patten, member of Sex Kitchen, heading to San Francisco or Seattle or New York or something. Graphics, pages 9 and 11. Jean Shelby still dishing out the recipes, page 10. D. Castleman, from Mill Valley, CA., said nothing about himself. Perhaps his poem, page 10, does. Sir J Smard, nothing is known, but the origin is Newton, we think, story, page 11. Matt Lampiasi, recently moved to the area, causing a storm, art, page 11. Paul Huneck, poem, page 11. William Monohan "writes fiction and plays guitar for the Slags." A long (but it's worth it) short story eats up pages 12 and 13. Blair Wilson, somewhere in CA., art, page 13. Deb Donnelly, PP's mainstay photo artist, the shot on page 14 is from a series in Kenya. Nolwegh has something to do with an A Le Goaux from Ontario, poem, page 14. Andre Busi wraps it all up, page 16. Come August 22cd 1991 look for the bigger, better, baddest Back to School Issue you could ever imagine, till then . . .



# ANOTHER REASON TO QUESTION BREAD & CIRCUS BY CORWIN ERIXON

In Leah Ryan's SAPCAT (That's a Self Administered Political Correctness Aptitude Test, for all of you acronymically impaired readers out there) in the April edition of Perkins Press, question number two was "Dread in Surplus, your favorite natural foods supermarket, is revealed to have discriminatory hiring practices. You ..."

...Well, what do I do? I applied for a job there. You see I thought Leah was just kidding around. After all, if ever there was a commercial arbitrator of PCness in Massachusetts, it had to be that giant food boutique, Bread and Circus. Now, I know better, Bread and Circus will never be my bread and butter. Bread and Circus does have a reprehensible and unnecessary discriminatory hiring policy.

To understand the extent of the corporation's hypocrisy, you'll need to know a little bit of my background. I have been a professional chef for five years. I've been working in kitchens since 1984. My most recent tour of duty was at Sienna, a small high quality grill in South Deerfield. I left the restaurant business in search of a better salary and better working conditions.

I applied for a job at B&C because I enjoyed working with a wide assortment of food. They had an attractive benefits package. I was very well experienced (over-qualified, as they put it) and, (here's my big mistake) I thought the corporation had a progressive attitude. Now, here's the clincher: I have a ponytail that reaches just

about down to my tailbone, and, get ready: I'm a man. That's right, I'm one of those sociopaths, a man with long hair that you see so often here in the Pioneer Valley and in Cambridge, the sites of the B&C's at which I interviewed.

I am currently filing a complaint against Bread and Circus with the Massachusetts Council Against Discrimination, in Springfield, because it was my perception that the sole reason I was not hired was due to my sex and the length of my hair. Because this article may be used in court as evidence, I want to emphasize that I'm writing it to express my disgust with the corporation's discriminatory hiring policy, and to expose that policy to the readers of Perkins Press. I did not apply to Bread and Circus for the sake of writing this article, nor was I aware of their discriminatory hiring policy before I applied there. It is equally important to note, as a matter of public record, that I would have worked there, as long as they offered me an acceptable starting salary.

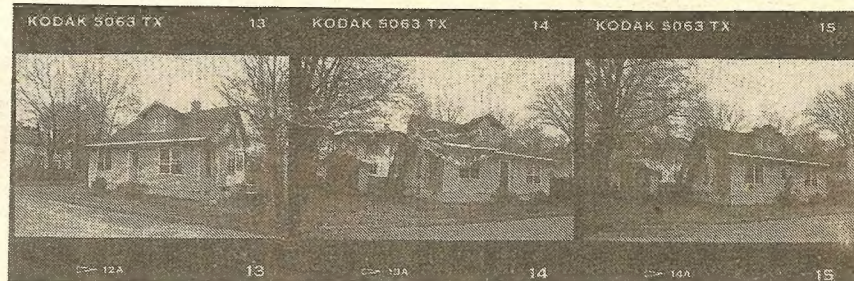
Here are the facts: In mid-April, at the suggestion of Joanne Smith, a vice president at B&C, I applied at the Hadley branch. I was then interviewed by Michael Brown, an assistant manager. After a brief discussion, he told me that I was "very over qualified" for the only open position, a cash register clerk for their small restaurant. The job was only part time and paid very little. I told him that I was not interested in the position, but I

was very interested in working for the corporation.

During the interview he restated several times that I was "over qualified" and that people with as much kitchen experience as I had were strong candidates for employment. He then said that he would forward my application to Gabrielle Mendeshn at the head office in Brookline for consideration at their other branches. At no time did he ever mention anything about my personal appearance (in fact I was wearing

matter of professional pride that the food I was preparing was presented well, as in without hair in it, and that my hair had never been an issue at any job I had ever worked.

Cecilia told me that she would speak with her supervisor to see if an exception was possible, and, as we concluded the interview I said I was still interested in the job, but not in a haircut. A week later she left a message on the machine saying sorry, keep on trying. In early June I received a



my nice new "applying for jobs suit" — and I thought I looked pretty handsome.)

As most of you readers probably already know, the job market in this area is pitiful, so I took up the search in Boston. After reapplying at the Cambridge branch, I interviewed for the position of assistant manager of the merged Deli and Seafood departments with Cecilia, the manager of those departments, on May 3rd.

We climbed a narrow, spiral staircase to reach a tiny cramped office from which one could spy on the cashiers through small foot level window slits. Though we were interrupted many times the interview progressed well. Cecilia seemed somewhat tired and distracted, and she apologized, saying that it was the end of a "long and crazy day." I empathized with her, saying that I knew how it could get, and that restaurants were the same, if not worse.

We had been speaking about the available position and my work experience for about forty-five minutes when suddenly, while I was still speaking, she retrieved an employee handbook from a shelf over my head. She flipped through it quickly and then said to me, "Oh no, I was afraid of this, I'm really sorry." She then showed me the section on personal appearance, in the handbook. It stated that male employees may not have ponytails longer than their shoulders. The only restrictions placed on women's hair were that it must be well groomed and properly restrained. At the time of the interview, there was at least one female employee there whose simple ponytail was longer than mine. Like Brown in the Hadley store, Cecilia had also commented during the interview that I was well experienced, and that B&C kept their eyes open for candidates with restaurant experience.

I did not know how to respond to this blatant example of sex discrimination. Nor did she, it seemed. There was an awkward silence which she broke by saying again that she was sorry, and "I know it's not fair." My response was that I had been a chef for years; I knew what the health code was, I was confident of my ability to appear well groomed, that I considered it a

very polite rejection letter from B&C stating that position had been filled and that my resume would be kept on file. Which file, I wondered.

This is the basis of the sex discrimination suit which the Massachusetts Council Against Discrimination is now investigating. Needless to say, my shopping days at B&C are over, which doesn't bother me since I couldn't afford anything there in the first place. The last thing this state needs (besides B&C) is more litigation, but I feel it's necessary to pursue this suit in order to expose and end this obvious case of sex discrimination.

My Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary defines bread and circus as "A palliative offered especially to avert political discontent." It's a show the Roman government would put on to try to convince the populace that things were fine just the way they were, instead of addressing the crisis at hand. Bread and Circus, the corporation, uses a similar bait and switch tactic. They strike a noble pose, a progressive business concerned about environmental and social issues, but they reveal their true mercenary nature in their discriminatory hiring practice. If the company wants to actually live up to the new values it so hypocritically touts, it could begin by examining its own policies and transforming their progressive ballyhoo into an opportunity to treat their employees, customers, and potential employees ethically and without prejudice.

So, if you readers don't want to be PCCR's (Political Correctness Counter Revolutionists), please think twice about Bread and Circus. Their hiring policy is discriminatory: The investigation by MCAD is only to find out whether the forms of discrimination B&C practices are legal or not. Why should you shop somewhere that may consider you or your friends unemployable, depending on your sex and the length of your hair? Why help pay their corporate lawyer.

Perkins Press encourages your responses, pro or con, to this article, particularly if you are the CEO of B&C and you want to use PP as a public forum for your letter of resignation.

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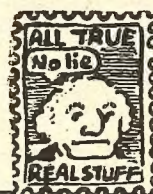
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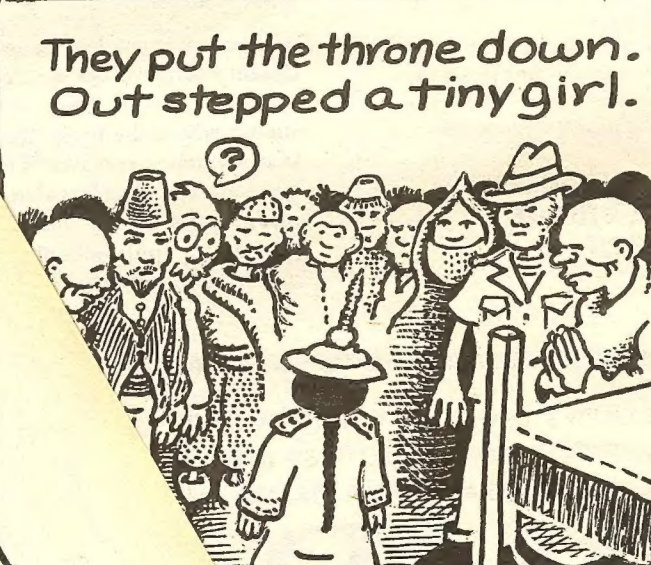
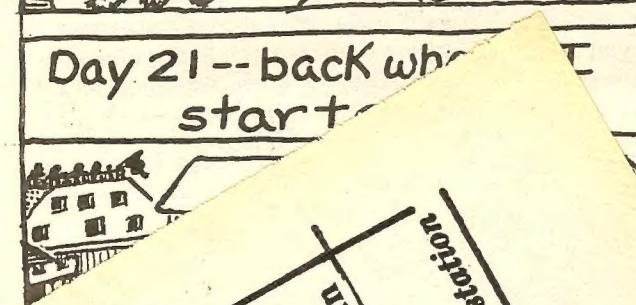
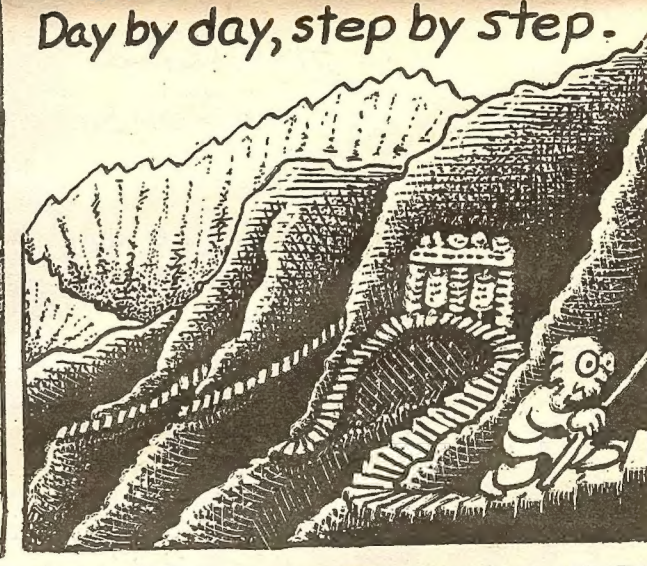
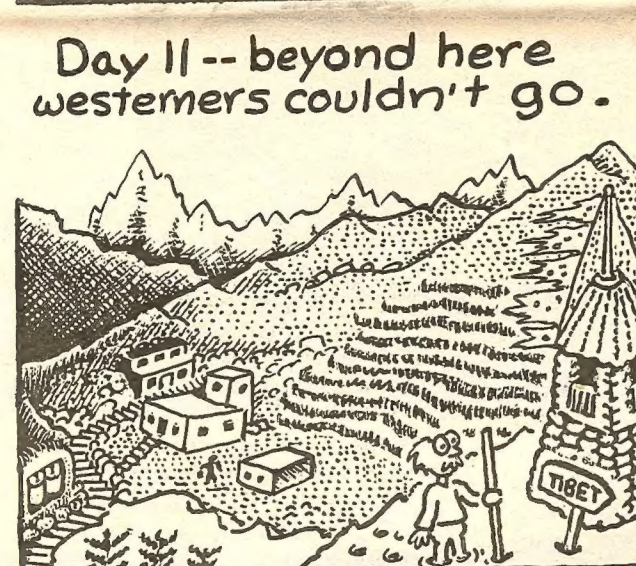
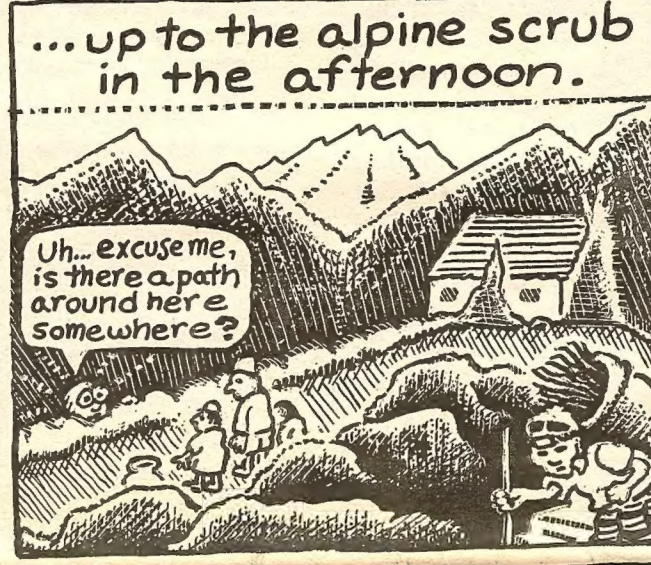
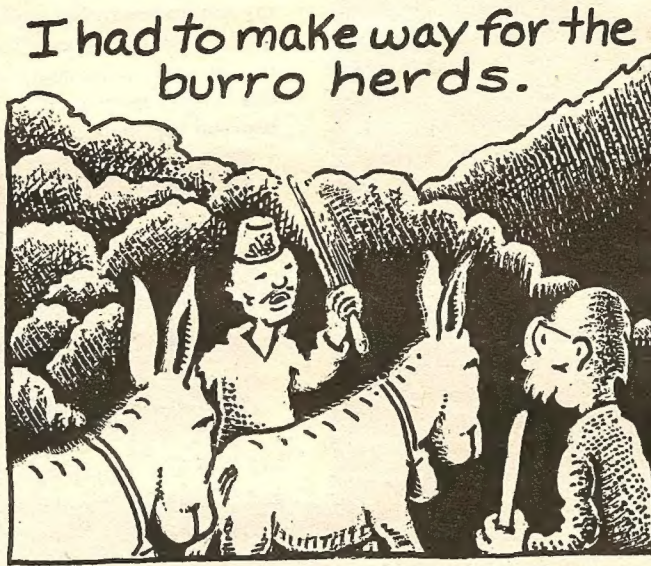
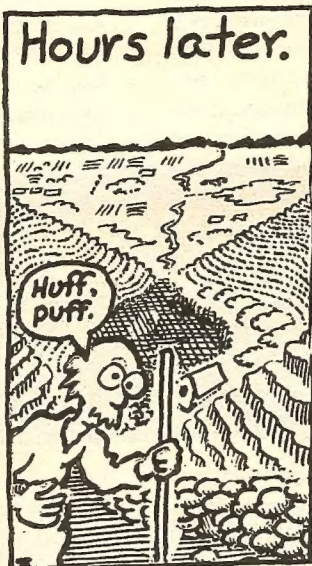
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Nor...



# John Sununu's Favorite Barbeque Recipes

Your life only seems important because you happen to be living it. There's no need to think of it when you're switching channels, not switching channels or floating in the void between high noon and 12:01 pm.

Your life means nothing to the ruling elite. As a matter of fact you're in their way, underfoot. If you're reading this it may be that guardians of the status quo may be thinking that you think too much about yourself or maybe them and their thoughts about you, maybe. John Sununu wants you to go shopping. Think about that.

When the television is through watching you it does not go to sleep. The men and women at the other end of it are thinking, a little, about you. They are wondering before cocktails if you just went into the kitchen for a sandwich and a beer or if you are really going to go out and get some today because it's new and improved. They do not love you. They do not even like you. Surprise them. Walk back into the room and smash their little world. Send them the pieces with a note.

You have every reason to be paranoid. Ask anyone who is. There is a relatively thin atmosphere around your body that your neighbor is afraid to touch. Till then it's all right as long as they don't rearrange the furniture. Tell them your ozone layer has a small hole in it and you need some of theirs. If they reject you it may be that they are home to an over-industrialized society. They may be in trouble and in need of help. It may be that they are unaware of this and are using up precious time acting like assholes. Prescribe something a professional wouldn't dream of and look deep into their eyes for a camera.

I must stop giving out advice. My life is unimportant to you. If I sold advice by the hour would my life become meaningful to you? Is there someone across the street looking at you? What's the attraction? The government views you as a customer. When they don't see you they think you have dissolved into a series of reactions. Some think you don't even exist if they don't see you. They have forgotten the rules. Many of the pieces are missing. The corners of the box are frayed and ripped. Things fall out. Someone has to tape them. Time out.

Maybe the person across the street loves you. Even just now, though in an hour they'll forget what you look like. You could walk across the street and ask them. In addition, you could stop paying taxes.

Show me a gas barbecue grill and I'll show you an alienated society. There are as many of these in third world nations as

there are stoplights in Maine. That's a visual. For audio try the sound of a bible banging. If it has an ending then it is said to be of God. If it has no resolution, trails off like rock or reggae, then it is said to be of the other one, the guy with the horns. Jimmy Swaggart was Jerry Lee Lewis's cousin. This is truly epic.

The one with the horns used to be simply a natural sort of deity. It looked like a tree and sounded like the breeze. It seems every race had a good place for her or him. Them. Now comes the sound of the bible: banging. Believe every word of it if you must. The midevil christian church was

into power like wall street. Like madison avenue. Road warriors. They did a make-over on the one with the horns. They weren't called midevil for nothing.

The person across the street is gone. You didn't act in time. Now time has passed you by once more. Your life could have changed. Instead, they took a small piece of you with them, but dropped it on the sidewalk a half a block away. You were born alone. You will probably die alone. You may as well get used to it unless you start taking those initiatives seriously. You are allowed to jump one space in either direction. You can grab the one by the

horns and recall that you are a part of the scheme of things. Be careful crossing the street, but cross the fucking street. You can get your atmosphere real close to another if it's meant to. Your gravities can collide in that incredible kiss and resolve, or fade away.

John Sununu was turning some weiners on a gas barbecue grill in Maine when most people stopped paying their taxes, saying the hell with it....

I really just want to kiss you before I die.

DON OGDEN



Photo: Dondi Ahearn

## THE LATEST POET

At this moment  
of despair,  
she too  
becomes a poet.  
At first glance,  
it looks like a letter  
but the way she struggles  
for the right word  
through the smudge  
of tear-stained ink  
gives it away.

She is writing a poem  
because that is where  
the tracks of her emotions  
lead her.  
And she only scribbles  
his name at the top left  
hand corner of the page  
for reference.

John Grey

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# Skin

by Pilar Sanjuan

Most people are unaware of where the materials that make up their clothing come from, or, in fact, what they once were. So, let me tell you a little story... a story about the reptile skin trade. If you think reptiles are bred on big farms with lots of food to eat and reptile games to play, you're wrong. Ok, more realistically, if you think that reptiles are responsibly gathered from the wild where they exist in obvious abundance and need to be "harvested", you're also wrong. If you think that the story I'm about to tell might be a little painful to read and maybe even make you feel a bit guilty, you're probably right.

But keep reading.

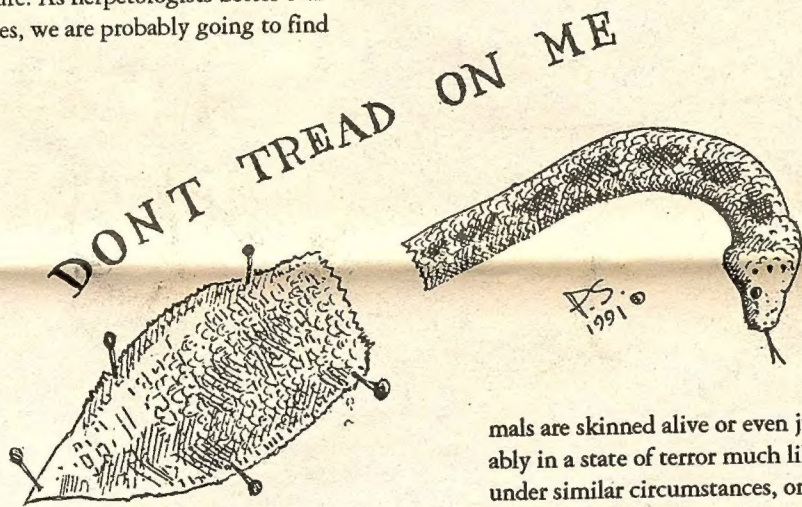
The reptile skin trade probably started when humans first began trading, in the dawn of what some call "civilization". Back then, of course, the industry was just a wee bit smaller and less destructive. In recent history the trade has had its booms and busts, mostly directly related to the whims of fashion trends (sometimes related to species extinction). Current fashion trends seem to be causing a new boom for the trade. Modern designers gain leaning toward the eccentric look again. Reptile skin has always been a somewhat eccentric fad, especially large quantities of it, like jackets or pants. Today, clothing stores are filled with boots, shoes, handbags and belts made from various reptile skins. Some of the more expensive stores, such as Neiman Marcus (Needless Markups?), are selling items such as suits, pants, coats, etc. made from reptiles.

"Where do they get the skins?", you might ask. Well, I'll tell you.

Although it's true that the number of reptiles known to be seriously threatened or endangered is small in comparison to the long lists of birds and mammals, the reptiles' number is likely to soar in the near future. As herpetologists better evaluate the population of reptiles, we are probably going to find

skins that left their countries of origin illegally. Such "laundering" is a common practice in some countries. Brazil, which has banned commercial hunting of most wildlife since 1967, has lost much of its wildlife through this type of laundering in

recent years. The Pantanal region of Brazil (an 11 million hectare wetland) loses about one million caimans annually, mostly illegally, and these are shipped primarily through ports in Bolivia and Paraguay, where they often by-pass government inspection altogether. On December 5, 1990, the bootmaker, Tony Lama, agreed to pay penalties and costs totaling \$143,000 and to stop importing python skin boots after he was sued by Los Angeles County for violating the California endangered species act. The firm had sold over 5,500 pairs since 1987, at about \$300 a pair. You have to wonder how he got them in the first place. Rattlesnake roundups are the major source of rattlesnake skins used in commercial products. Rattlesnake roundups are incredibly damaging to the environment. The poisoning of the earth that results from several methods of rattlesnake collection is the most obvious environmental hazard. But in addition, rattlesnakes fill a very important niche in the ecosystem. They eat rodents. These are rodents that eat crops and wildlife vegetation that is food for other animals. If the snakes eat the rodents, they can't damage the crops or crowd other species out of their habitat. Rattlesnakes are also an important food source to several endangered predatory birds. If the rattlesnakes are wiped out in an area, then these birds have a food shortage. The methods used to collect rattlesnakes also kill other forms of wildlife which share dens with the snakes. There is a wide variety of mammals and other reptiles who live in rattlesnake dens who are killed when the den is poisoned or destroyed. According to some biologists, snakes may feel pain and experience fear just as much as humans do, and possibly even more. Their nervous systems are different than ours, but not necessarily less sensitive. Since they rely on their senses for survival to a greater degree than humans do, it follows that they probably have a more sensitive nervous system than humans. When these ani-



that many species, previously considered stable, are actually declining. Consider also that the habitat suitable for reptiles is shrinking worldwide (rainforests, wetlands, etc), and prospects indeed look grim for the future.

The skin trade plays a major role in the decline of reptiles in the wild. According to the World Wildlife Fund in Washington, DC, in a typical year, 300,000 - 500,000 live reptiles; 2,400,000 reptile skins and 15,000,000 to 20,000,000 products manufactured from reptiles are legally imported into the United States, at an estimated declared value of \$250,000,000. In the 1950's, when snake skin became very popular, a single tannery in Madras, India processed 5,000 to 10,000 skins each day. That means 5,000 to 10,000 animals each day or 1,825,000 to 3,650,000 animals a year were destroyed in Madras alone. There also exists an extensive black market for reptile skins. Despite protective legislation enacted by some countries, such as Panama and Columbia, the trade in smuggled skins continues due to the very limited capabilities of the government as well as limited desire to enforce wildlife statutes. It is fairly difficult for most countries to enforce these laws. Government officials often cannot recognize different species of snakes or lizards, which are easy to camouflage with dyes and bleaches. Even non-altered skins can be hard to distinguish once processed. There is also a problem for the importing countries. For example, in spite of import prohibitions of certain species of caimans (a South American crocodilian) and restrictions on the import of other species, the United States has great difficulty controlling the shipments arriving at U.S. ports. This is mostly due to limited personnel and conflicting administrative priorities within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Many reptile skins come to the US via Europe, usually as finished products. Although shipments arriving at US ports from Europe are usually accompanied by Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species re-export certificates, many violations go unchecked because our government does not routinely investigate country-of-origin declarations. This means that the US may permit the import of significant quantities of products made from

mals are skinned alive or even just mishandled, they are probably in a state of terror much like a human would experience under similar circumstances, or a dog or a cat. There is a common belief that unless a snake or lizard is skinned alive (this is usually done by nailing it to a tree by the head first) the skin will lose its suppleness. A snake or a lizard that has been skinned alive may suffer for several days before it dies. Snakeskin products are not made from the skins snakes normally shed. The reptile skin industry is also harmful to poorer inhabitants of the foreign countries involved. Skin traders are wealthy. Reptile collectors are not. A trader convinces the local people that he will pay them a great deal of money if they will bring him animals. In reality, a great deal of money for the local family is very little to the trader as well as to you or me either. I certainly wouldn't look for vipers for a couple of dollars. As a result, the local people become dependent upon the traders and the traders become very rich. Yet, the local people are doing very dangerous work and frequently die or are badly injured in the process. What I'm trying to say here is that you should not buy reptile skin products. In fact you should go into stores that sell them and let them know why you won't buy them. Understandably, some people have difficulty expressing their views to complete strangers, but the least you can do is avoid buying these products and avoid wearing those you may already own. If you wear reptile skin, you're telling people that you think it is okay to do so. If people don't buy these products, the market will decline and this will slow down the extermination of the world's reptiles. You can also write letters to your local and national representatives or to the stores which you know sell reptile products. Sometimes a letter is easier than direct confrontation. You can get the names and addresses of your members of Congress from the League of Women's Voters in your area. Remember that all species of pythons, boas, alligators and crocodiles are threatened or endangered. Many species of lizards are also threatened. Several other United States reptiles (indigos, timber rattlesnakes, etc) are endangered or threatened as well. If you want more information regarding reptiles or the reptile skin trade, you can contact The Reptile Defense Fund at 5025 Tulane Drive, Baton Rouge, LA 70808. A portion of the information for this article was obtained from The Northern Ohio Association of Herpetologists (NOAH) Department of Biology, Case Western Reserve University, Cleveland, Ohio 44106.

# Noise

By Mr. Stick Figure Income

There are sounds out there. Masterful, powerful, subtle and sublime. Music? Of sorts, perhaps, but it is not widely accessible by radio, MTV or your local pub. These are sounds of the psyche — yours, mine, theirs. Machine, skin and nerve driver electronics which go straight at and through you, leaving you in ecstasy, aurally pummelled. Those sounds are out there.

There is one place where these sounds of local and worldwide experimentation are available. The place is RRR records, started in January of 1984, with Due Process coming soon after, in 1985. The following is a conversation with founder of RRR, Mr. Ron Cessard.

S: What have you put out on your label?

R: 68 LP's, 24 tapes, 2 CD's, among other things.

S: How hard were the beginnings?

R: Easy. For a year I scrounged every flea market, yard sale, junk shop and bought every "rock" album for \$1.00. This was the original stock for the store. Then I wrote every distributor, label and artist I was interested in and then I wrote down a catalog, bought some ads in Indy-type magazines and from there it all fell into place.

S: I've noticed there aren't many women in this line of sound. Why?

R: I'm not sure. Maybe men just have more internal anxiety/ tension/ whatever, necessary to appreciate it.

S: Do you feel harsh electronics, musique concrete is beneficial in a therapeutic sense.

R: There is a Dr. T. Sakaguchi now involved in studying the relationship of noise and the brain syntax. He hopes to apply noise as therapy for epileptic seizures.

S: Have you had any hassles with censorship or anyone else on the product you create and/or distribute?

R: After pressing 50 records for me, Ville Platte Pressing Plant decided they can no longer press any records for me. They simply can not deal with the stuff I send them. All the noise makes them pull their hair out. Roughtrade once refused to distribute my PGR album because it had a female nude on the cover. A couple of years later they release the Pixies with a nude on the cover.

S: What makes you decide on carrying a product? Originality, talent, what?

R: Everyday I get tapes in the mail. Mostly they go in one ear and out the other. Originality is not the issue. What is important is the work. The results — is good for what it is — a personal document or commercial venture.

S: What about those who read this and say where can I hear this?

R: Only those who are genuinely interested will ever get to hear it. Some college radio stations play the stuff and some magazines write about it. Just give them my address and tell them to buy my 1991 Taste Test Cassettes.

RRR Records

151 Paige St.

Lowell, MA., 01852

## A SCULPTURE

We were bone and flesh, our love a language spoken with passionate softness but we've hardened into statues living in a strange museum, and our speech is the cold articulation of the silence in dead places.

Walt Franklin



# Notes from the Fringe by Carlo Valone

Samuel Johnson felt that patriotism was the last refuge of the scoundrel, Ambrose Bierce disagreed — he felt it was the first. H.L. Mencken felt it was the "first, last and middle refuge of fools."

The outpouring of misguided patriotic flagellation in the wake of our Persian Gulf adventure has produced enough evidence to prove them all right. But, unchecked patriotic fervor is not just the

## Telephone Terrorism Continued

A number of people have asked for more detail on how the telephone based protest described in the last issue would work. Here are a domestic and an international example:

A good example where a domestic protest that failed could have been turned into a success was the Eastern Airlines strike. There you had a union that in spite of justifiable grievances was not able to garner enough support from American workers to bring effective pressure on Eastern's management. Had they used phones to tie up Eastern's reservation clerks they could have brought enough economic pressure on management to make them responsive. If tying up Eastern's reservation system was not enough they could expand their protest by jamming the 800 area code which is mainly business orientated. This would have brought pressure from within the business community for Eastern to be reasonable. Remember it only takes about 10,000 to 20,000 people calling simultaneously to overload any telephone systems microwave network.

An international example of how people around the world could help an oppressed group beyond their political borders can be found in the Palestinian situation. Here you have an oppressed and basically powerless group that has little opportunity to bring pressure on their Israeli oppressors. If all Palestinians scattered around the world were to call Ariel Sharon and Itzac Shamier collect the whole international telephone system could be tied up.

There is no doubt about the technical feasibility of this form of protest; the question is do people have the will.

business of scoundrels and fools — it is an emotion laden tidal wave that threatens to engulf us all.

The government and it's media handmaidens have spared no effort to turn this war and past wars into a giant myth — a saga of heroes and heroines voluntarily giving their all in the defence of noble ideals like freedom, democracy and justice. Down the memory hole have gone thoughts of wars for oil, human carnage and the resurrection of the military industrial complex. It all should give us pause for thought but, alas the parade must go on. Forward into the abyss.

It is a sorry spectacle to see Washington politicians who have resisted the pleas of the victims of Agent Orange for over 15 years, now trip over each other to embrace the veterans they so recently scorned. Nor did they give much thought to what might happen to the men and women they sent to the gulf—as with Viet Nam few of their friends and family would be asked to die. If further proof is needed that human

life takes a back seat to political considerations one need look no further than the Iranian hostage crisis that was manipulated by Reagan and Bush to win the 1980 election.

Those close to the troops (such as former joint chiefs and the present Joint Chief—Colin Powell) advised against a military solution because they rightly feared the worst.

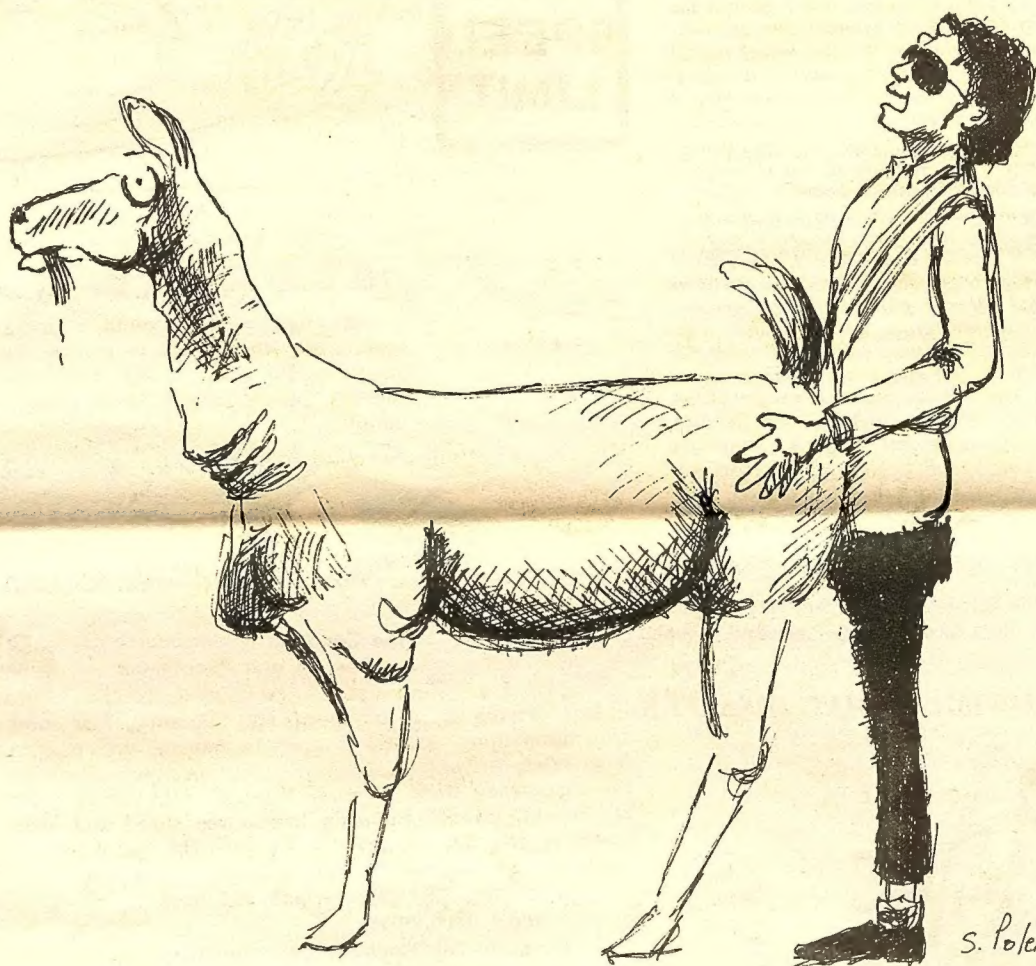
Recently Larry King tried to examine what was wrong with the endless parades, culminating with the giant spectacle on June 8th. The discussion went nowhere. It is very hard to stand up against motherhood and apple pie. However, if we avail ourselves of historical analogy we can gain some insight into what dangers may lie ahead.

Some critics of the military—patriotism refer to it as jingoism. It is ironic that the term Jingoism came into being to describe the conservative supporters of Disraeli's Middle Eastern politics.

A more recent and apt analogy is Germany in the mid to late 30's. Hitler and his propagandaists took the bitter defeat of WW1 coupled with their smashing intervention in the Spanish Civil War and wrapped the whole thing up in enough flags to silence all but the most indiscreet critics of National Socialism and his New World Order. Knowing what he did with the yellow Star of David we can only imagine what he could have accomplished with the yellow ribbon. He did make it a crime to burn the flag of the Third Reich and punished critics in a summary fashion. Viet Nam, the gulf, the flag and a new world order. De ja vu all over again.

This piece started with the quotes about patriotism and it seems fitting to close with a quote from J. William Fullbright's "The Arrogance of Power."

"To criticize one's country is to do it a service ... Criticism, in short, is more than a right; it is an act of patriotism — a higher form of patriotism, I believe, than the familiar rituals and national adulation."



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I once dreamt that:  
I awoke with the sun  
but then there was none  
only blackness everywhere  
The sky had been blue  
that once had been true  
now darkness rules the air  
something went wrong  
we had waited too long  
to defuse the almighty bombs  
The generals, they lied  
and the people, they cried  
"Don't make our world a tomb!"  
but the fools that did rule  
had souls without cool  
and they really didn't care  
so before we knew it  
they all said screw it  
and now all species are rare.

John Lefas



# Everyone who rides in a car needs to read this



**Corwin VonErixon**

Dear cory, I've been reading your column for lo these many years, for information as well as entertainment. I've read many worthwhile articles submitted by your readers, but never has anything startled me as much as the enclosed article *Despairing in Lodge Grass*:

Can You Put the Fear of Injury and Death into a Youthful Driver?

Do you know what happens in the first fatal second after a car going 55 miles per hour hits a solid object?

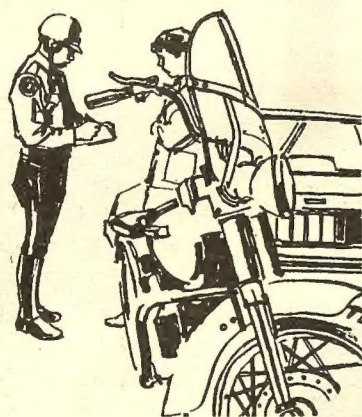
I didn't want to go that fast. But Larry and Frank were with me, and they asked what was the fastest I'd ever gone. I was only doing fifty at the time, and I could just feel that they thought I was chicken. They never said anything, but I could sense it. And then when I hit sixty and seventy they were all smiling, and I felt admired and exhilarated, so I just pressed down on the accelerator and got it up to eighty, then eighty five. Then

The smooth feel of the new surface exhilarated me, and I gunned the car. Suddenly my left front wheel bounced into an over-looked pothole, nearly tearing the steering wheel out of my grasp. The car swerved left. I tried to correct the situation by steering and braking, but we had already leaped the divider strip and found ourselves hurtling across the highway at high speed. The car struck the embankment and rolled several times. My right front wheel dropped off the pavement and onto the gravel shoulder. The edge of the pavement makes the drop-off 2 or 3 inches high there. Maybe because of the noise from the gravel and all, my immediate reaction was the wrong one. I remember I jerked the steering wheel to the left so hard that the rear end began sliding and the car spun completely around. We tore across the road backward into a gas station, ramming into the gas pumps, and then crashing through the glass front of the building. At that point, the road curved downhill and to the left, but we plunged straight ahead, striking a boulder 3 feet from the right side of the road. I didn't apply the brakes until just before we struck the boulder.

I dozed off to sleep and the car ran off the road. I woke up just before striking a culvert, after apparently edging gradually off the pavement for about 250 feet. My car struck the cement culvert head-on, jumped across a driveway, and plowed through some small trees before coming to a stop.

Bob did not tell his story until ten full days after the accident. He was swathed in white bandages and in painful traction.

## THE THREAT OF IMPENDING DISASTER



The teen-agers who use the car as a two-ton tranquilizer to act out their personal problems are a small minority, but well known to police and traffic courts.

How can you tell if a teen-ager is headed for trouble in the car? Look at how much success he is having in other areas of his life. A teen-ager who is consistently unsuccessful with sports, school, the opposite sex, and recreation will tend to use the car to increase his standing (at least to himself) and express his hostilities to the world.

These desires seem to loom large and grow rapidly as the youth has his first contact with cars. Naturally parents wonder where this urge for acquisition and alteration will end.

Tire chains in most cases, looped down in front of the handle bars for easy reach. An occasional long-bladed knife in a sheaf strapped conspicuously to some easy-to-reach bar of the frame. Bludgeons too and several homemade maces with spikes welded to their heavy-balled ends. Tire irons wrapped with tape and even three rifles in scabbards

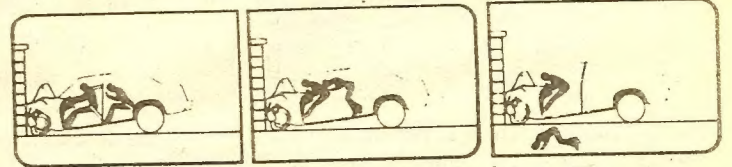
There is one good predictor. It persists only in the more immature, the more affluent, or among those who have no long-term educational or vocational goals to pursue.



Fans numbering 100,000 watch patiently, only getting excited when there's a juicy crackup.

AMERICA'S MOST OUTSPOKEN ADVICE COLUMNIST  
from Raptured Publications

Why do the speed demons do it?



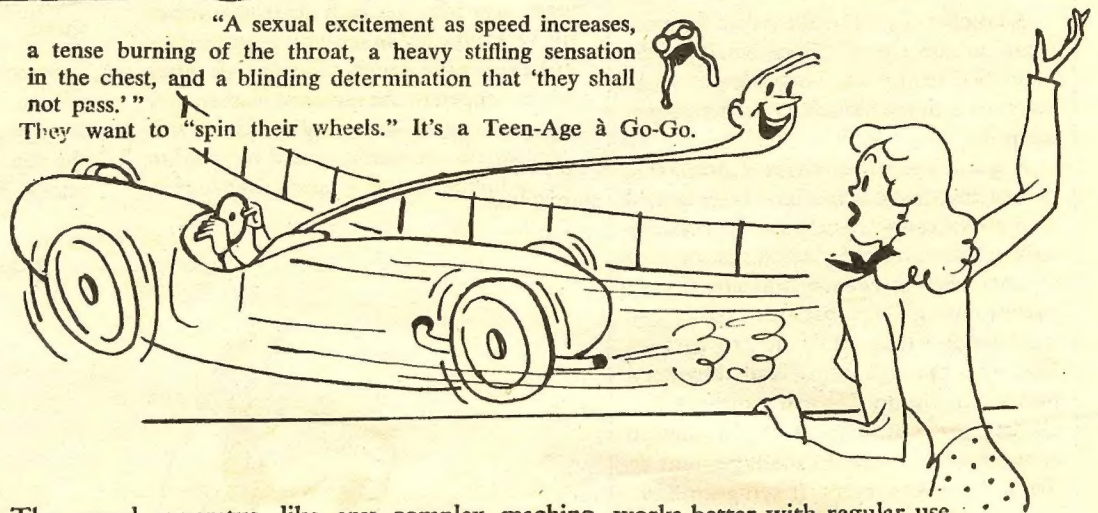
Feeling his blood becoming a part of the car's circulation, he begged more speed out of it . . .

Blotches of oil blacked out his windshield just as the *Blue Bird* snapped the timing tape. In his rocketing prison, Campbell continued to torture the accelerator, and covered the required mile in 12 seconds. But as he slowed down to 280 miles per hour, the left front tire blew and the *Blue Bird* went crazy. With the skill that comes at near death, Campbell spun the wheel furiously in order to right the skidding car, and 5 miles later he stopped—with flames eating up the bad tire!

# YEEOWCHH!!

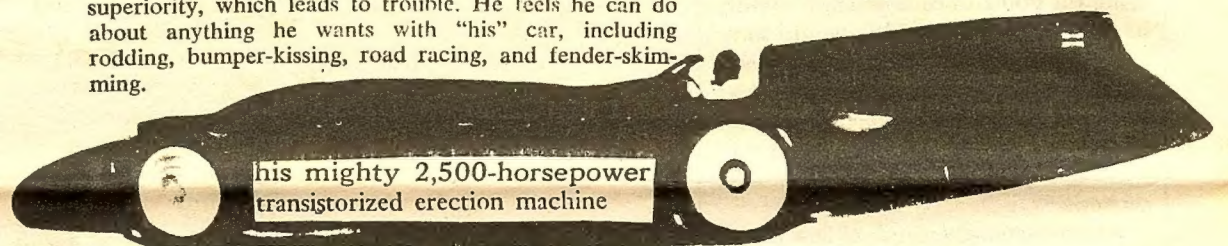
"A sexual excitement as speed increases, a tense burning of the throat, a heavy stifling sensation in the chest, and a blinding determination that 'they shall not pass.'"

They want to "spin their wheels." It's a Teen-Age à Go-Go.



The sexual apparatus, like any complex machine, works better with regular use.

It often gives a youth a sense of smart-alecky superiority, which leads to trouble. He feels he can do about anything he wants with "his" car, including rodding, bumper-kissing, road racing, and fender-skimming.



The Car As a Potent Source of Reward and Punishment



Just driving is a source of real pleasure. The most frustrating thing that can happen to teen-age drivers is to have other drivers in the way, other persons occupying the space they want to move through. The car provides excitement, power, glittering brightness, speed and challenge. It provides an opportunity to break loose from a world of tight restrictions and fly along the highway.

1. In the first 10th of a second, the front bumper and grill collapse.

2. The second 10th finds the hood crumbling, rising and striking the windshield as the spinning rear wheels lift from the ground. Simultaneously, fenders begin wrapping themselves around the solid object. Although the car's frame has been halted, the rest of the car IS STILL GOING 55 MILES PER HOUR. Instinct causes the driver to stiffen his legs against the crash, and they snap at the knee joint.

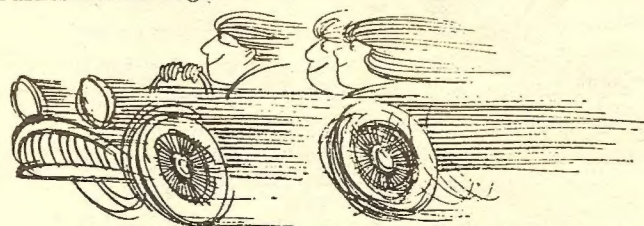
"Fresh-killed chicken," says the headline under a picture of a youth lying dead on the pavement with two wrecked cars in a head-on collision in the background and his friends looking on in sorrow and dismay.

3. During the third 10th of the second, the steering wheel starts to disintegrate and the steering column aims for the driver's chest.

4. The fourth 10th of the second finds two feet of the car's front end wrecked, while the rear end still moves at 35 miles per hour. The driver's body is still traveling at 55 miles per hour.

Frightening youngsters doesn't work very well, especially with boys, who are very reluctant to admit to being afraid. According to male standards, fear is not acceptable. Girls, however, can be impressed with gruesome statistics. Girls are not only more emotional, but don't have to be ashamed of being afraid!

5. In the fifth 10th of a second, the driver is impaled on the steering column, and blood rushes into his lungs.



Further, fear is a tricky motivation. It does more than motivate you to forget unpleasantness. It arouses anxiety, because people are not sure what they can do to avoid these dangerous consequences.

6. The sixth 10th of a second, the impact has built up to the point that the driver's feet are ripped out of tightly laced shoes. The brake pedal breaks off. The car frame buckles in the middle. The driver's head smashes into the windshield as the rear wheels, still spinning, fall back to earth.

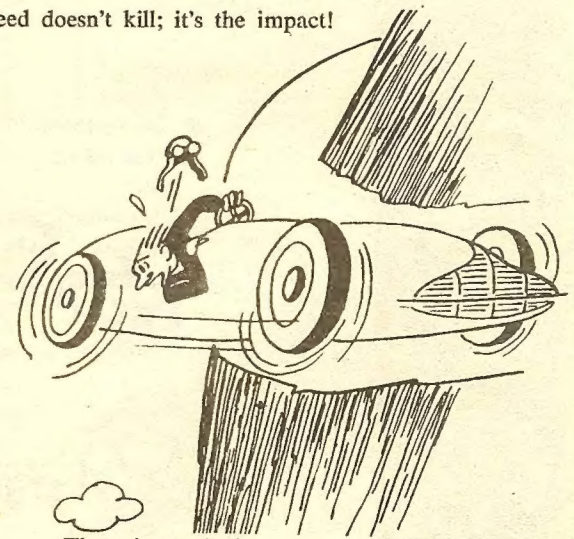
7. In the seventh 10th of the second, hinges rip loose, doors fly open and the seats break free, striking the driver from behind.

Fear is difficult to communicate because people don't want to keep thinking about anxiety-producing events. The sight of an accident on the highway may slow you down—for how long? About five minutes is par!

8. The seat striking the driver does not bother him because HE IS ALREADY DEAD. The last three 10ths of the second mean NOTHING to the driver.

A stunning acceleration of tragedy, no matter how you look at it.

Speed doesn't kill; it's the impact!



There is no doubt—cars represent happiness.

It's an insatiable thirst! You can play Russian roulette, Detroit style, all the way home.



fiction by Leah Ryan

"We're triangulating," she said. "Or something. Something weird is happening. Isn't it?" "What?" The plastic cap on the ultramarine blue paint was stuck fast. The ridges around the edge were stripped down, bent and flayed. I couldn't find my pliers. "I feel like you guys have a some kind secret," she said. "You and Brendan." I set my jaw and gripped the spiny cap again. My fist ached. "You're not listening," she said. I squeezed the tube, and the bottom split. A small blob oozed from the hole. The color was dense and bright, like catalog pictures of the Caribbean sea. "Fuck," I said. Sandy flung her jacket up off of the bed. The suede snapped against itself. I looked up from the tiny blue blob that sat quivering on my index finger. "I'm going," said Sandy. Her hair was in a loose braid, which was coming undone. It hung around her face like a veil. I looked at her and thought about how I didn't care what she did. If she stayed or went. She kicked a pair of my jeans halfway across the room. They flew into the piece of plywood that I was trying to get the blue open for. It was a portrait. It had started out as a portrait. It didn't look like one anymore. It didn't even look like a person. "Aren't you going to say anything," she asked. I shrugged. It was stupid; a jerky, graceless gesture. The blue drooled from the crack in the bottom of the tube. I felt it splash against my finger on its way to the floor. My heart began to pound. Sandy stared at me with her hand on the doorknob. "Okay," she said. Her face looked bruised in the dusk light. Her eyes were vague holes. She turned the doorknob and looked down at the narrow blade of light that fell in from the hall. I closed my eyes. I didn't open them again until I heard the hard metal sound of the latch coming together again.

My hand was the blue of the American flag, of Mediterranean Vacation skies. It was also the color of Brendan's Datsun, which was parked about two blocks away. Brendan's band was rehearsing in a building nearby. Tonight they were working on a new song. Brendan had played it for Sandy and I on my crappy acoustic guitar a few days before. The strings had buzzed so loud that I'd had to concentrate in order to hear anything else. I couldn't believe he was making these noises on my guitar. It didn't make those noises when I played it. Then again, I didn't really know how to play. I'd hit the strings quietly, carefully. I could find my way around a few songs that somebody had taught me once and I'd never forgotten for some reason. It was an exercise in hand-eye coordination. It wasn't really music. When Brendan banged away on the thing it wasn't much like music, either. But someone like me couldn't have done that, couldn't have made those sounds. The song had a silly name, like *Ballad Of The Squashed Possum* or something like that. I found some electrical tape in a shoebox, amongst dingy erasers and stiff wrecked brushes. I patched the hole and threw the tube into the shoebox that I kept all of my paints in. The lines and creases in my blue hand were bright and clear. I didn't know anything about how to read them.

It was getting dark and I was out of cigarettes. I sat on the bed for a while without turning on the light, until I figured she was far enough away. I don't know how long it actually was that I sat there. I was thinking about going to Brendan's car, for no good reason. He wasn't in it. I thought about the car because I didn't want to think about him and his rehearsal. I couldn't go near that. A month before, I would have just showed up. I was Brendan's best friend. I knew all the guys in the band. I designed their posters. But now there was something wrong about it. Brendan was nervous when I was

around. He wouldn't look at me. Brendan had even started making a point of hanging all over Sandy when the three of us were together in public. Sandy wasn't stupid. Of course she'd known something was up. She knew. She knew exactly. She hadn't quite said it, but she'd come close. I thought about how it had probably hit her, how maybe on the front porch she'd stood for a moment and thought, Oh My God. And wondered why she hadn't figured it out sooner. I thought she might have even said "Jesus Fucking Christ" out loud, and stood there with her mouth open. For a good little while. I could see her, standing there. I waited until I was sure she'd have to be gone. First I had to get cigarettes. Before anything else. I went to this little old store that was a block from where I lived. It was one of those places with a heavy screen door and a mildew smell, with everything stacked up to the ceiling. The guy behind the counter always wore a filthy yellow NAPA Auto Parts hat. I bought two packs of Marlboros. The guy in the hat seemed fascinated by my hand. I'd forgotten it was blue. It was starting to look less like paint. It looked like a disease now, or a birth defect. I pushed open the heavy creaky door on my way out, not paying attention. I was pulling the cellophane off of one of the packs of Marlboros, ripping out the tin foil. I stood on the curb and lit one. Then I looked up. Brendan was on his way across the street, with a bunch of other guys from the band. His hair was stuck to his forehead and he had his T-shirt shoved halfway into his back pocket. He looked electric. Playing music made him look like he was high, even when he wasn't. I liked seeing him like that. It made me kind of jealous, but mostly it made me smile, and when I saw him, I did. "What's up," he said. "I've gotta get something to drink." He brushed past me and went into the store. That morning the three of us, Sandy, Brendan and I, had gone out to breakfast. Actually, it wasn't really morning. It was more like noon. Sandy and I had woken up late after a long night, restless and chaste. We woke up tired. On the street we ran into Brendan. We sat in a booth and Brendan and I tried so hard not to look at each other that we both stared into our coffees and said next to nothing for an hour. Sandy kept sighing deeply. It was hot that day, and humid. We left Brendan outside the diner. He kept narrowing his eyes against the sun, but looking, too, at me, through angry, baffled slits. We hadn't talked at all.

Sandy kept asking me what was wrong, all that afternoon. She knew, I could tell she knew. I didn't want her to know. And Brendan didn't want anybody to know. He'd made me swear. "It's not that big a deal," I'd told him. "It doesn't have to happen again. We can just forget about it." I'd said it as if I meant it, while he'd covered himself, suddenly shy.

Since then I kept going out of my way to go past his car when I knew where it was. And I was stopping to look inside it, at the scummy paper coffee cups on the floor and the week-old newspapers. At the overflowing ashtray. I was reaching out to touch the door handles until something would stop me, saying What the hell do you think you're doing. Jesus Fucking Christ. I was walking past the window of the apartment where I knew he was rehearsing, listening. All the time knowing I was doing it on purpose and acting like I wasn't. I was taking out pictures of him that I had. I didn't have many. They weren't anything special. Softball games. Lousy band promos. And they looked so different. I was sitting with them and staring, looking for what it was that was different. I was having a hard time putting them away.

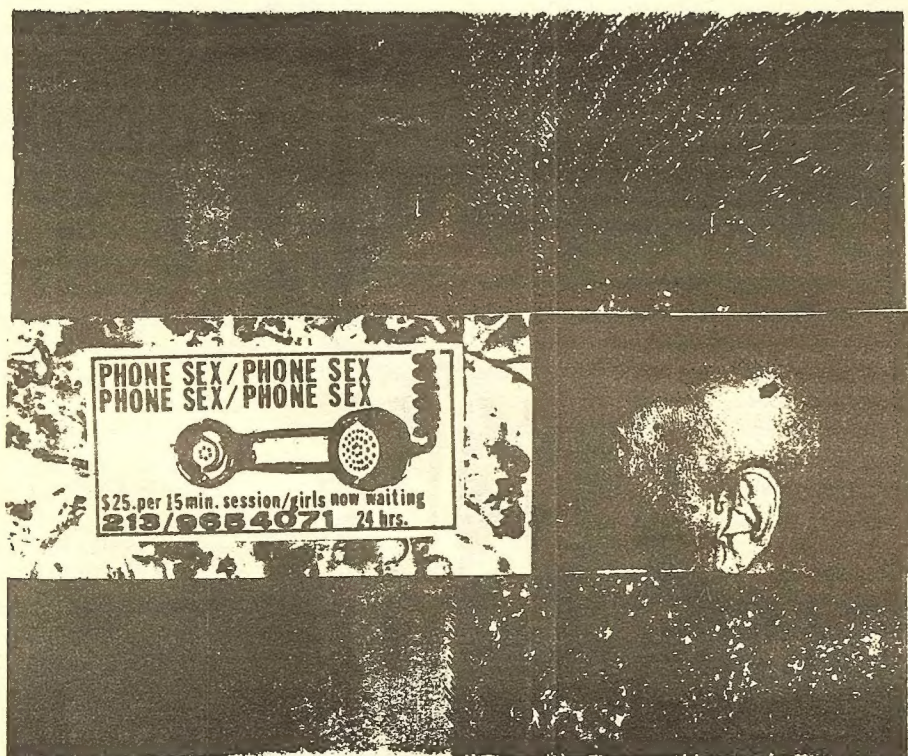
I was waiting to see him every day, and then when I did, we were never alone and that didn't count. I stood on the curb and wondered if I should wait for him to come out of the store or not. In a split second, I decided not to. I walked away. I



art: Gary Wortzel

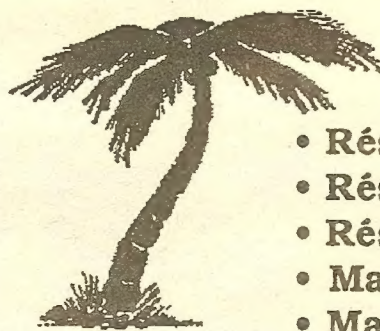
practically ran across the street.

The bar on the corner had its door flung open, and the music and the smell swelled out into the street. Stale beer, yellow popcorn that came in big greasy bags. Cigarettes. Inside it was dark, and almost empty. I went up to the bar, ordered a beer, and reached into my pocket. I found a few crumpled, wadded bills. I tried to straighten them, to flatten them and make them both lie in the same direction. I had grown used to my blue hand by now. "Sorry," I said. "Money's money," said the bartender, and he took it gently from my fingers. I sat down and picked up the square, damp napkin that he'd given me with my beer. I didn't have a pen. The bartender had one behind his ear. Can I borrow your pen, I asked. He said sure and he looked at me. I wondered if he'd looked at me strange. It seemed too long. But it was hard to tell. I was guessing at everything. The beer tasted weird, like pond water and tin cans. I'd written two words and I thought there should be more but I didn't know what else there was to say. The blue ink ran on the wet paper. The words were spidery, stretching out to the napkin's edges. I shoved it into my pocket and headed for Brendan's Datsun. I looked at it again before I stuck it between the windshield and the wiper blade. SHE KNOWS, it said. So what, I thought. Of course she does. Any asshole could tell that. I took the napkin back off the windshield. I thought of what else I could say. I shoved it into my pocket. I took it back out, and I threw it on the ground. I mashed it with my shoe. I looked up at the building across the street. I could hear the music, very faintly. It was the new song, *Ode To A Dead Refrigerator* or whatever it was called. I walked away from the sound, humming. After a while, I hummed only what I could remember.



graphic: Aimée Patten

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# COOKING

By Jean Shelby

I'm in a big hurry this month. I'm going to the Virgin Islands to get away from this awful weather and practice being a virgin. Packing is taking a lot out of me, so this month's column will be short. It's too damn hot to cook. I suggest you eat out a lot. But my beloved editor threatened to write the column for me; and since all he eats are tofu pups and grilled cheese, I thought I'd better get crackin'.

During the dog days of summer there's all kinds of salads that are relatively quick, healthy and satisfying. Then all you need to do is buy a loaf of bread, a hunk of cheese or some cold cuts and some fruit, and you're all set. Also the bowl you make it in will sit in your refrigerator for a couple of days so you don't have to sweat about washing it right away.

Here are some of my personal favorites:

## CHICK PEA SALAD:

2 cans chick peas  
1 red onion  
1 red pepper  
1 green pepper  
1 can olives (optional)  
1 jar artichoke hearts (optional)  
for the dressing use  
6 Tbs olive oil  
2 Tbs vinegar  
thyme  
garlic and pepper  
then,

Cut the vegetables into whatever shape you like and mix with chick peas and other ingredients. Mix dressing and pour amount of your liking into salad, and stir. This is even better the second day.

## GAZPACHO 1 & 2:

Not a salad, but a lot like one. Look at last month's Perkins Press, which you better have saved.

## CUKES & YOGURT:

3-5 cucumbers  
1/2 small red onion  
parsley  
mint  
1 cup plain yogurt  
1 tsp. or more red wine vinegar (to taste)  
pepper  
Slice cukes and dice onion and chop parsley and mint. Mix together with yogurt and vinegar and pepper. Taste to correct seasonings.

## TOMATOES WITH BASIL:

several ripe garden tomatoes  
fresh basil  
olive oil  
vinegar  
thyme  
pepper, garlic  
This is only good with tomatoes from the garden. Slice however many tomatoes you feel like eating or serving, arrange on plate. Chop fresh basil coarsely. Make the same dressing used in chick pea salad but cut the amount in half. Pour over tomatoes, sprinkle basil on top, and serve

## FATTOUSH:

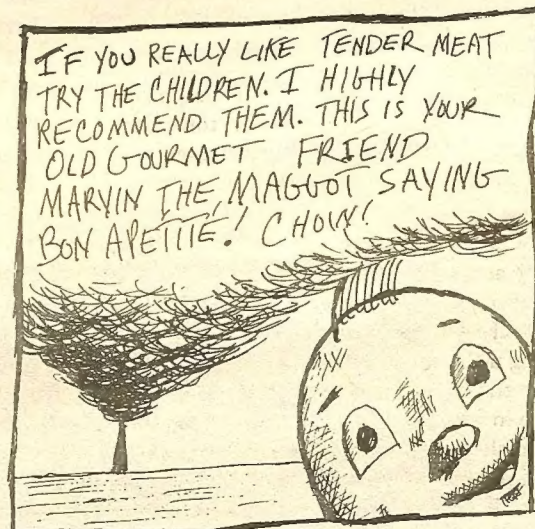
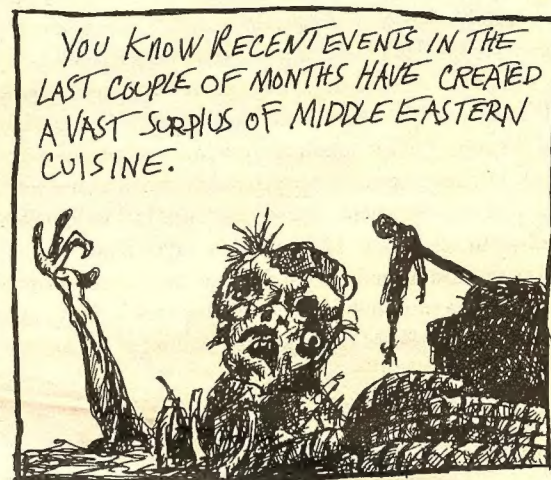
(a mid-eastern bread salad)  
1 large chopped cucumber  
1-2 diced tomatoes  
1 bunch chopped scallions  
1 bunch fine chopped parsley  
2-3 T. fresh chopped mint  
4 cups - pita chips - (toasted 1" pocket bread)  
dress with  
1/4 c. lemon  
1/4 c. olive oil  
salt and pepper

## MARINATED STRING BEANS:

Blanch and cool 3-4 cups of green, yellow or purple beans  
toss with 1/3 c. olive oil  
1/4 c. wine vinegar  
1 T. lemon juice  
1 crushed clove fresh garlic  
1 T minced fresh basil  
3 T. diced red bell pepper  
2 t chopped red onion  
salt and pepper to taste.

## Marvin the Maggot

POLITICALLY AWARE DEPT:  
WE WILL RETURN TO MARVIN'S ADVENTURES IN HELL NEXT ISSUE.  
IF THERE IS A NEXT ISSUE. I FIGURED I'D GIVE YOU ALL A LOOK  
INSIDE MARVIN'S VIEWS OF RECENT EVENTS. BORING ANYWAY. AND PLUS  
ME THE STORY WAS FUCKING BORING. THANK YOU I'M A LAZY BASTARD. VITO PELLINI

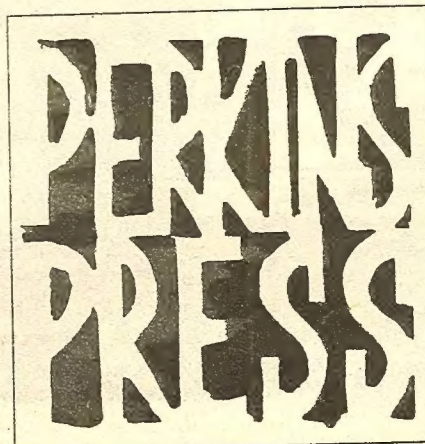


Mercy?  
Do you ask for mercy?

You will be given a toad  
and a bucket of salt,  
and nothing more.

Do not ask for more.  
There is none.

D. Castleman



Perkins Press  
13 Perkins Ave.  
Northampton, MA  
01060



## CHANGING PATHS

by Sir J. Smard

Yesterday, I saw a dream. It wasn't the kind of massive dream where large grey clouds move fiercely across a jet black sky. It wasn't the kind where you feel you are falling and you wake up on the floor, and it certainly wasn't the kind where you dreamt you ate a big marshmallow and woke up in a pillowless bed.

It wasn't that kind at all. This one was different. I tried to change paths.

I don't usually dream that much. That's probably because I almost never get a good night's sleep. You see, I happen to be a veteran insomniac. My routine usually consists of studying until about midnight. By two I'll know whether or not I hold any sleep in store. Sometimes, I'll go out to the track and run myself until I drop from exhaustion. I've learned however that physical exhaustion, the kind where your body cries for rest, for stagnancy, is not the same as sleepiness.

After doing this I drag myself back to my room, pull my clothes off, and go to the shower dizzy (from the running) and worried. Being exhausted without being sleepy is strange. You lie down and think that your body wants sleep, but it only wants rest. It's frustrating as hell.

In the shower I have this habit of making the water a bit hotter every few minutes until the lever controlling temperature is all the way to the hot side. I wish either that the pain from the water will get so intense that I'll pass out, or that it will get so steamy and hot that the same thing will happen. Neither ever does. Having exhausted that plan, I'll usually turn to masturbation as a means of relief and it works. It's really great. The only problem is that there's a time limit on that sort of thing. Right after I've finished though, I get really depressed. That's usually when I get out. When I get back, I'll just lie around on my back staring up at the ceiling, until I finally fall asleep around 6:30. Around two hours later I'm usually awakened by my alarm for my nine o'clock class.

That's the routine.

Yesterday, I followed except for one deviation. When I fell asleep, I saw the dream. I saw myself walking tiredly, desperately, among the halls of my dorm. I was holding my chest, and I felt my heart racing out of control. Boom, boom,boom, boom right away it was going. Then, suddenly, I heard a crack. It was a strange and magnificent sound. It was as if the crack of a bat hitting a baseball in early spring, and the sound of thunder during a heavy rain had merged. I fell to the floor in the middle of the lobby. My heart had broken I thought. It had cracked. Scenes and images whirled through my mind in a tornado-like circle. I saw many lettered words whose meanings were foreign to me. I saw the covers of books which I had noticed in the library often but hadn't read. I saw my old house, a shapely grey house in a small suburban town in New Jersey. I saw my best friend, his blonde hair gleaming in a ray of sunlight, smiling at me. I could hear the voice of my track coach as he yelled at me to run faster. I saw the first girl I ever kissed, her eyes melting under my insecure glance. I saw all those things in a second. It took just a second to inventory my life.

I rose quickly from the ground of the lobby and thought of persons who could fix my broken heart. Who can fix my heart? It's really weird, but at that moment I thought of Humpty Dumpty. you know, all the king's horses, and all the king's men couldn't put Humpty Dumpty back together again. That stupid line came across the screen of my mind. I started envisioning how my broken heart looked. I saw it all dried up and cracked. I could feel its warm contents spilling out. the liquid of my heart, my essence was spilling out and fertilizing my insides. I thought of waking up my roommate, but no, that would be inconsiderate, he had a test tomorrow and would be mad. other people on my hall, faces without names caught me. I was afraid to knock on their doors, to wake them up, to ask them for their help.

My RA I thought. Sure, he won't mind, that's his job. He'll do it. He has to. Yes, he has to I thought. I looked desperately

but couldn't find his door. The door that offered help was missing. I ran up and down the hall, I made sure every door I looked at was not the one. My heart was almost empty now. Almost nothing was left inside. They would be able to save very little I thought, if anything.

Then, I saw it. It was the door to the other hall. It was the door that separated the halls. There was a big black hat on it. It was like the kind that leprechauns wore in cartoons who spoke of their pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. I reached out for the hat, groping for it with my arms as I ran towards it. I reached for the handle, and threw the door open.

I saw everyone. Everyone on my hall was there, but they were laughing. I didn't know whether or not they were laughing at me, but they were laughing really hard. Yes, I thought, they are laughing at me, they must be. They're laughing at me. They are. At that moment, I realised that my heart was totally empty. Nothing more was coming out. It was as if my heart was an egg and someone had just cracked it, leaving only the thin, weak shell.

I felt dizzy, and started falling. After I had hit the floor a really bright white light shined in my eyes and then before me there appeared a large forest. I was walking in a small clearing towards it and as I got to its edge I saw a number of paths. I felt rushed, and forced to choose and in a panic I chose the one near my right because it looked more familiar although I had considered going to the left. The forest was dark, and there were a number of bushes with thorns and tree roots sticking out of the ground which could be easily tripped over. At the end of the path though, was the shining white light and it allowed me to see where I was going. The path next to mine, the one I had thought about going on, was visible through a thin layer of shrubbery. While I was going along, I kept looking over at it. Suddenly, my foot hit a root, I fell. The light was

gone from my path. I could no longer see. I frantically looked over at the other path and saw that it was still light. I tried to cross over through what seemed to be a thin layer of plants and bushes but I couldn't. The wall was much thicker and sharper than I had at first thought. I began to feel cold in the darkness of my path, and reached around for something to hold on to, for security but found nothing.

I woke up to the rhythmic high-pitched sound of my alarm around 8:20. As I always do, I opened one eye, spotted the snooze bar, and slapped it. At 8:43 I heard my roommate say, "Are you gonna get up?"

I raised slowly letting my eyes adjust to the light. I saw him tippytoeing so that he could see himself in the mirror so he could comb his hair. He had on these solid black boxer shorts, and these nerdy as hell George Jetson slippers. I kind of laughed, and then fell back sighing. We would usually go to breakfast with a few other guys

from the same group, but I dressed really slowly and told them to go on without me. When he had left, I quickly finished dressing, went down the hall, and knocked on the door of Jamie Deeve. He moaned when I knocked.

"Goin' to class Jamie?"

"Yeah, just gimme a minute."

I waited a few minutes. He came out with his blonde hair ruffled a bit in the back as if he had tried to sleep for a few minutes after he combed it. He wore white, acid washed jeans, with a plain white t-shirt. "What's up." He said when he saw me waiting for him.

We didn't talk much while we were walking to class. It was pretty awkward. We talked slightly of how we did on a paper handed in a few weeks ago. After that we were quiet. When we reached class, I sat down in the back row alone while he took a seat near the front, next to some other guys he knew.

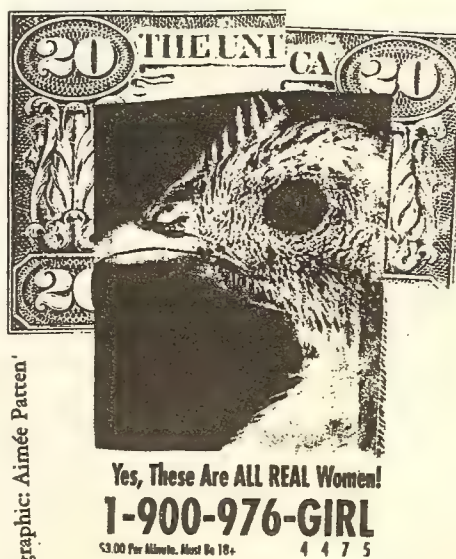
I'm still trying to change paths.



art: Matt Lampasi

MAUSOLEUM in Cemetery near GRAVE AVENUE NORTHAMPTON MA 911

M. LAMPASI '91



graphic: Aimée Patten

it's unusual, the nakedness of things.  
Andre Breton  
skirts through my mind  
he illuminates  
a pale  
another world  
without death.  
death sounds like teeth.  
relinquish what?  
myself?

Paul Huneck





photo: Corwin Erixon

## AT THE VILLAGE HALL

Short fiction

By William Monahan

There was no smoking in the Village Hall, according to both an obvious sign, and the Gorgon stare of a lady unknown to the smoker, Henry Birch: the woman looked out through a screen door at him, and Henry, startled, took a reflexive step back. The woman's face, old, not beautiful, was distorted by the screen as if by a bank robber's nylon stocking.

"There's none of that in here," the woman said.

"Yes, ma'am," said Henry. That is why I am outside.

"Keep it that way."

The apparition vanished. Henry Birch remained on the front porch of the Hall, a peeling French Empire mansion on a knoll above one of the curving, green-banked roads of the quiet, twilight village: residents were arriving, had been arriving. A jaunty middle-aged man with hair like Art Garfunkel's came up the leaf-littered stairs, wearing tennis clothes and carrying under his arm two versions of a sign that said BEHAVIOR STREET. He paused and looked at Henry in a very unfriendly way.

"I don't know you," the man said. Henry Birch was or had been a well brought-up young man, and he really didn't know what to say. He was not yet used to New York — much less Long Island.

"I don't know you," the man said again, more loudly.

"So what," said Henry.

The man went inside. Two bourgeois old women came imperiously up the steps and Henry forgot himself and held the door. The women passed through without acknowledging him. Henry pressed his lips tightly, waited a moment, and then went on into the Village Hall, pulling his reporter's notebook from his back pocket.

On a table inside the vestibule, under an ovoid mirror that reflected Henry's cowlicked hair and inexperienced New English face, there was a pile of photocopies of the agenda for that evening's meeting of the Board of Trustees of the Village of Geronimo Estates. On another wall in the entry, there was an aerial photograph of the subdivision, where seventy-odd families lived in seventy-odd mock-Tudor houses on looping roads to nowhere. Henry sat on a bench and copied a few things off the agenda before he realized, tyro reporter that he was, that he could simply keep the Agenda. He got up, and uncomfortably went and looked into the room off the hall in which the Board of Trustees was to meet.

Spectators, grim, fiddling with prepared statements, were settling into folding chairs; the adipose lady responsible for the minutes was plugging in her tape recorder. At the street end of the room, the ballroom of the original mansion, whose estate had been chopped up into the Estates, there was a demilune table at which Village officers were settling behind their name cards. Henry put his eyeglasses on and, standing in the doorway, copied down the names, relating them to faces. To his horror he saw that the man to whom he had said "so what" was identified as Mayor Handley Greeman.

The Mayor glared, and whispered something to the Village Attorney, at his right. The lawyer looked combative. Henry went nervously to the back of the room and sat down, next to

a plump man smelling of sweat and cologne, who smiled at him, and then leaned so close that Henry thought he was going to be kissed.

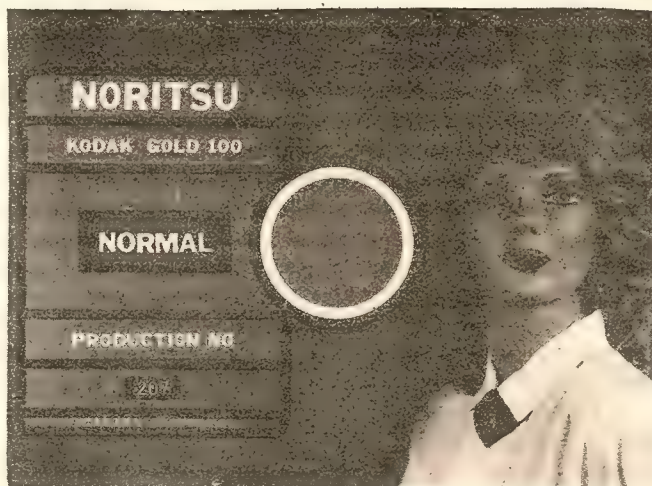
The man stopped listing towards him. "You don't belong here," he said, in the nicest possible way.

"As a matter of fact," said Henry, "I do. I write for the News."

"We've never had a reporter before," the man said. Henry looked up. Everyone in the room was looking at him as if they were going to rush and tear him to pieces. Henry looked stern, practical: clicked his pen. Faces turned away. The obese man left him alone reluctantly. The meeting came to order. The trustees were all present: but it seemed that the Chief of Police was late. There were some nasty comments. The placard saying "John F. O'Moon" was propped forlornly on the table, before an empty chair somewhat inferior to the ones in which the Village officers sat.

Movement that we formally censure the the Chief of Police," said Trustee Larry Kingfield, whose head looked like a canned ham with spectacles. It was seconded by Trustee Sally Moorhead, who looked ready to second anything: the movement was put to vote and resolved.

"Resolved that the Chief of Police be censured," said the Mayor; "and that his drinking habits be investigated. Hey!



What about a fine?" He turned to the Village Attorney. "Can we do that?"

The Village Attorney mumbled something discouraging. The Mayor sighed, philosophically, and went on.

"We will now here a report from the Environmental Commission," he said. "Is the Environmental Commission here?"

"Yes, Your Honor," a single voice said: it belonged to a very short woman in Indian print caftan and sandals, her gray hair pulled back. She stood, and cleared her throat.

"There is no progress to report on the Laurel Street smoking ban. Dr Noseworthy still continues to smoke cigars on his property despite repeated warnings and two written citations. He feels that he has a right to smoke cigars on his property." Titters. "When I went to explain to him again that his neighbors found his smoking offensive, he blew very foul smoke into my face, and I have, accordingly, filed charges of attempt-

ed murder.

"In the matter of the reported arachnidocides at 17 Buckingham Palace Road, Mr. Harrison Pounding has confessed to killing two spiders with a rolled up newspaper, and has admitted responsibility for last week's rains, which flooded this development, causing much property damage. The Environmental Action Service Committee has created an Environmental Action Service PreAdvisory Advisory Committee to recommend punishment of Mrs. Harrison Pounding, and to consider ways in which we can prevent arachnidocides from occurring in the future. A public education drive is in the planning stages.

"Ms. Donna A. Wexler of 25 Woodmite Drive is still wearing polyester.

There is a success to report, in the area of Pond Conservation. We have conserved a pond. Mosquito breeding is up forty percent from last July, and is expected to continue to rise, thereby bolstering the weak spot in the local food-chain.

"Robins eating fermented berries and thus becoming dangerously intoxicated have been causing property damage — to wit, three broken windows on Circumference Drive. An advisory committee has been formed to look into the roots of the problem of alcoholism among robins.

Thorough investigation of the psychological roots of avian substance abuse will equip us with the tools with which to deal with this growing problem effectively.

That is the report of the Environmental Committee."

Amidst applause, the woman resumed her seat. Henry sat stunned, his pen poised, not having taken a single note. The Mayor, Mr. Greeman, banged his gavel on a piece of petrified California redwood, which flew to pieces. A man at the front row flinched spastically, grabbed at his eye, and then stumbled from the room. Henry started to rise, but no one else appeared to have noticed, and he sat back down.

"We move on to the DPW Report. Let it also be noted that at 8:12 the Police Chief has still not arrived. In my secondary capacity as Director of Public Works, I will report on the business of that Department. Let it be recorded in the minutes that: One. The new streetsigns have been delivered. I show here both the old, and the new, signs for Behavior Street." Appreciative *aahs* from the audience. The man next to Henry clapped, and Henry looked at him.

"The new signs, as you will note," said the Mayor, "include a period, or full stop, after the abbreviation 'ST', or, as the case may be, DR, LN, CT, or, of course, RD."

The man next to Henry chuckled complacently, and dug Henry in the ribs with his elbow. Henry shoved him violently. This takes care of a glaring Commission which has bothered us all for years." Applause. "Let me add that the new signs are non-reflective, and will be virtually invisible at night. They will also, of course, be emplaced behind overhanging leaves at intersections, and will furthermore, be put up at random around the Village, with no regard for accuracy. If you belong here, as I've always said, you know where you are."

There was appreciative applause. Trustee Donald Lake spoke up to move that this obvious sign of the Mayor's continued popularity be noted in the Minutes; and then moved that the Board officially congratulate the Mayor by means of a lobster dinner to be held at the earliest opportunity, and paid for out of the Village treasury. All present voted Aye, including the Mayor.

Henry sat dully, and then remembered suddenly what he was doing, and in a terrible spastic panic scribbled "streetsigns" on page one of his reporter's notebook. Then "birds".

It was just then that the room fell dramatically silent, and the police chief came in. He was an overweight Irishman with a moustache. His uniform cap was under his arm, and his shoes were shined to a degree only possible if shining shoes is a pathological obsession. He was flushed bright red, and even at a distance of several yards, Henry could smell the whiskey on him.

"Chief O'Moon," said the Mayor. "How thoughtful of you to join us."

Everyone tittered. Chief O'Moon lurched a bit, and looked around the room. He belched.

"Fuck yez all," he said, and threw his hat across the room. Henry followed its trajectory with a bewildered stare, then looked again at the police chief, who staggered with some difficulty up the steps to the dais, knocked his name-card petulantly off the table, and then crashed down into his chair, which collapsed under him.

The Chief lay on the dais for some moments, only his legs visible, and then in complete silence, with some dignity, he rose and got another chair.

"Chief?" said the Mayor. The Chief sat down. After a moment he drew his revolver and put it on the table in front of him. A handful of people precipitously left the room. Henry stared.

"Fuck yez all," said the Chief. He giggled, and then, looking stern, banged the table with his fist. "Order in the court!" he shouted.

"Chief O'Moon —" began the Village Attorney.

"Order in the court!"

"Chief O'Moon."



art: Blair Wilson



"Smoke 'em if you got 'em," shouted the Chief.

"Outrageous —"

"Order in the court. Ordure in the court." The Chief then said several things that no one could understand; and then something that Henry made out as "Flotilla Huns macerate giraffes." Everyone looked at each other.

"Chief?" asked the Mayor carefully.

"Vanilla suns," said the Chief with more emphasis, "masturbate the raft." A wing of hair, normally plastered over his bald scalp, hung oddly.

"Yes. Well," said the Mayor, attempting to turn to other matters; but the Chief interrupted obscenely.

"What you. Fuck deaf?"

The Chief glared heavily, then chuckled, and caught himself drooling. Made a point, shaking a finger. "Sultan Ahmed firework see." Or something like that. "Smoke 'em if you got 'em," shouted the Chief. "Every swinging dick. Sonsabitches." "That's a very interesting point, Chief."

"Bet your ass," said the Chief. "Order in the court. Order in the court." He toyed with the revolver on the table. A few more people left the room. The Chief pointed an imaginary pistol at their backs. "Bang!" he shouted.

The man beside Henry had an epileptic seizure. Chairs went over and people started screaming. Foam was coming out of the man's mouth, and his legs were kicking wildly. When Henry tried to help him to the floor, the man got a fistful of Henry's hair, and Henry started screaming, too. Meanwhile the man's pager had begun to beep repeatedly, like a warning of android malfunction.

Henry was as aware as he could be that for some reason unrelated to the obese man's seizure, people were flooding out of the room, knocking over chairs, and screaming as they went. He tried to run, too, but the epileptic had him by the hair, and would not let go. Henry tried to drag the man along, but the gentleman weighed well over two hundred pounds, and was thrashing like a hooked trout, foaming horribly. Henry heard the Police Chief bellowing obscenities, and then three rapid gunshots.

Henry flung himself violently against the epileptic's grip, just as the man happened to let go, and staggered crashing through three rows of folding chairs and, falling, smashed his head on a sidetable, which upset, and left him on the floor in a litter of inter-village tennis trophies. He blacked out.

When he came to, the room was full of tear gas and the

curtains were on fire, police sirens were shrieking outside, and the Chief, with a bandanna tied over his face, was deeply involved in his last stand. Another tear gas cannister dropped into the room through the broken street window, and a terrific volume of gunfire, much of it automatic, was blowing out glass, peppering the walls, divoting the ceiling, smashing the woodwork, and filling the gassed room with a blizzard of plaster dust and wood fragments.

Henry, choking on the gas, was barely able to see the Chief, who — as leaping drunkenly from window to window, and blasting away at moving targets outside. Henry crawled towards a side door, just visible through the billowing tear gas, and was reaching up for the knob just as the door was kicked in, hitting him on the head. In the instant before he blacked out again he saw figured with rifles leaping over him into the smoke, screaming and firing.

When he came to, he was lying face down on the lawn, with a number of police officers sitting on him, and pushing his face into the mud. When the officers realized that Henry was conscious, they dragged him to his feet, and jerked him around violently: Henry began to say something, and they all started punching him at once, knocked him down again, and handcuffed him behind his back. A very fat officer sat on him. In the policeman's terrible excitement, he farted. Henry, through a forest of policemen's legs, some of which were kicking at him, saw that the Village Hall was afire and burning completely out of control. The volunteer firemen were trying to figure out how the hoses fit on the hydrants, while others were running about with axes, and others, conscious of popping flashbulbs and television crews, were surreptitiously smearing ash upon their faces. A K-9 officer was having difficulty controlling his dog, which was snapping viciously at anyone who came near. Henry was dragged to his feet again, beaten some more, and then propelled through a crowd of people, some of whom tried to hit him as well.

There were hundreds of people, whom the police were attempting to move behind the barriers that other policemen were erecting. A man was shouting something unintelligible through a bullhorn.

When the crowd behind the police barriers saw Henry, a shout went up. The policemen dragged him towards a paddy wagon, and on the way, Henry saw Chief O'Moon lying complacently on a stretcher, in the white glare of television lights, being interviewed by at least seven shouting reporters.

"Jesus I don't know," said the Chief. "Things like that you just react."

"What did he say when he produced the gun?"

"What kind of gun was it?"

A lunatic old woman appeared suddenly, with wild eyes and hair, and started striking at Henry with a stick. "Anti-semite! Mengele!" A great satisfied roar went up from the crowd, which made a concerted rush at Henry — who, however, was promptly shoved into a waiting paddywagon. His confused face, plastered with mud and grass, appeared for an instant in a chickenwired window of the van, just before the window was smashed opaque by a brick, and then the paddywagon motored off under a volley of rocks and garbage.

Later, in the prison ward of the hospital, while he was having his cuts daubed, Henry saw a portion of the news coverage of the event: he was described as a failed journalist who had gained admittance to the hall by claiming that he was on assignment for the local paper. One of Henry's neighbors, whom he had never before seen, described him as a "loner". The coverage cut to an interview with Trustee Kingfield, who had had an ear shot off, and the Mayor, who had an arm in a sling. The two men stood in the light of the burning Village Hall. "How do I feel? Shocked," said the Mayor.

"Horrificed," said Trustee Kingfield.

"But it was, thank god, a completely isolated incident. Let me stress that."

"Completely isolated," said Trustee Kingfield. "It was also, thank God, not our brand new three million dollar recreation facility that burned. I want to assure everyone of that." His one shattered lens for some reason added to his look of total sincerity. "Our community —"

"— remains adequately protected by its police force," said the Mayor, "which, as it is comprised of men of the caliber of Chief O'Moon, is certainly deserving of —"

"Recognition."

"Decorations."

"As soon as possible. Trust."

"Investment."

"Certainly." The camera zoomed in on Handley Greeman and he addressed it directly. the Village of Geronimo Estates can bear any burden, suffer any hardship, and remain a community where people stick together —

"No matter what —"

"— to ensure among other things the confidence of its residents —"

"— and creditors —" interjected Mr. Kingfield.

"— and the stability of property values —"

"— bond rating —"

Henry was rabbit punched in the kidney by an orderly, straitjacketed, and dragged to a cell, where he screamed obscenities and flung himself against the door for several hours while a psychologist on the other side of a false wall made copious notes, and nodded significantly at her assistant from time to time.

At Henry's arraignment his lawyer, having been apprised of the depth of evidence supporting the prosecution's case (the gun, eyewitnesses prominent in the community) informed Henry that an insanity defense was the only possibility, and Henry, who had been heavily tranquilized, agreed. Assaulted by journalists while leaving the courthouse, he was remanded to a state hospital for observation. In the course of the period of observation he was determined to be a paranoid schizophrenic, and the court, upon the recommendation of a psychologist, had him institutionalized until such time as he was again, if such a thing was possible, a functioning member of society.

At the state hospital, Henry for a time contrived to spit out his pills when no one was looking, and attempted escape, but he was caught running across the grounds in his polkadot johnny almost as soon as he got out of the building, and after that he was held down and given his medicine by injection. In due course, he became eminently tractable, and seemed to forget whatever it was that he had been claiming not to have done.

To the delight of the staff, he admitted to have been abused as a child, stopped feigning sanity in therapy, and, best of all, ceased to say worrying things like "You just described James Joyce, Lord Byron, Winston Churchill, Michelangelo, and Jesus." When the symptoms of schizophrenia were described to him. Once, during his "difficult" period, Henry had said, "Madness is genius without the requisite irony," and Dr. Panama had doubled his prescription of Haldol. It was generally agreed that this had done the trick. It was a further relief that he stopped claiming to be a journalist. the News claimed never to have heard of him, and that was good enough for the doctors: shortly it was good enough for Henry, too.

He adapted well, as the staff agreed, to institutional life. He did his chores, stopped asking for books and paper, watched a good deal of television, had a wistful and gentle romance with a slightly older woman who had eaten her Pekinese, and — an important element in his resocialization — became an enthusiast of the Pictionary game, which was the rage of the Violent Ward.

THE END





Photo: Deb Donnelley

**PP**'s influence being what it is in shaping the culture and very collective thought process for miles around our modest HQ, we were somewhat taken aback to find but one tape dropped off. But what a tape, gentle reader. Fred Schane sent it in with the title *Mental Malnutrition* wrapped up in a collage that goes by the name of *23 Faces*, which apparently has something to do with Fred's recently celebrated 23rd. birthday. So far, so nice. The tape itself "is a compilation of 7 of what I feel are my best works as yet," that's Fred speaking. Interesting is the word that came to mind, hurtling down the Pike recently. Lovely was another word, a little later as I took tea on the verandah. Yes, a tape to suit all personalities in all stages of activity and emotional growth. Mixing classical, (Brahms revisited) with tribal drum beats (at least one assumes without meaning to denigrate), much moaning and yearning.

To reiterate. Or start again. You've got your double reversals, the chorus mingling with a fart, birds, jabs at folkyness, the ever beautiful refrain from *As Time Goes By*. But what we have here, at base, is an attitude. Production is a trifle sticky on this effort, but no matter, because the the thing's got attitude.

I used to write stuff like this a lot and I got real sick of it because even when I thought I knew what I was saying I knew I'd said it all before and sincerity has a way of redefining itself when you tell little lies. This tape's none of my goddam business. It's a fine fucking thing, but who am I to say so. Huh? It's gentle, then mad, soothing and grating. It's lots of things. Worth listening to, sure. But I'm a phony for telling you so, and you're a phony for reading it and everything's all messed up. You know.

Drop a card to Fred Schane, 215 Crescent St., Northampton, MA., 01060 for the real scoop on this tape that I just happened to like plenty. But that's just me.

And.

Beyond that, no cultural news has availed itself to us, so we continue to wait for the Sunday reruns of *I Claudius*, making up life as we go along. You know where to send this "cultural news" stuff, the address is plastered all over this rag. Okay. It's over now.

**The spark that thought it was a snowflake, even as it ignited.**

That's it.

Shit on the video would have helped. Maybe some all-American hard-core pornography would have helped too. But what we got was bland acres of overly edited overly synthesized overly safe images of conventional Western cultural icons like Elvis and Studebakers and Las Vegas. Age is the cream of frustration: solitude is the lube job at the Speedy Muffler Garage. And isolation is freedom. Don't let them burn holes in your nose.

nolwegn





# Letters to the Editor

FUGAZI

Dear William,

Thanks for sending the copies of Perkins Press with the interview. Thanks also for the kind words, they lighten the memories of a rather difficult evening.

Take care,

Ian Fugazi.  
Washington D.C.

CRUSH

Dear Editor,

Do you remember that one afternoon when it was about to rain? The clouds were as heavy as an over-filled waterballoon carried by a mischievous kid and ready to burst. It was that day I read your story "Crush." My room was unbearably hot and I fell asleep thinking about it. I thought about the words "I've had a crush on you." And how those very words spoken to someone can feel like a vice on your heart. And what a relief it is sometimes when you don't say them. I thought about how hard we try to be in the right place. I wondered how much energy is expended collectively by people getting the attention of the object of their affection, and how often they run away when that person turns to look. I wondered if everyone falls in love — the coffeshop owner, the cop, the Smithie, the vagrant — or are they still recovering from their last love? I thought alot about things I have no words for and remembered a song a friend of mine (an ex-crush) once wrote: "I don't know how relationships start, or how they go but I always know how they end."

The water balloon burst then, spraying rain all inside my room, on my face and in my hair. I just let it in. I didn't try to stop it or close the window. But it was cool and clearing. It stopped and I hoped it would happen again.

Just like a crush,  
Anonymous.  
Northampton

Will,

Whoever typed up my story utterly butchered it! So it was with disappointment that I tried to piece together this mangled version as I opened the paper in foolish high hopes of reading my first story in print. Swapping entire paragraphs, dropped words etc. Ouch. Oh well. Get a new proof reader. To be angry is futile, but I just read the paper. Maybe we can try again, I have a lot of material.

I liked your piece, mostly because of my empathy due to remarkably similar circumstances. You evoke the situations well.

Please, if you print anything of mine again, promise me you'll proof read it personally.

Ed Hoban.  
New York City

Ah William,

Just finished your little story "Crush" and I liked it. It's too bad she didn't drive a white Subaru then you could obsess about each passing car. It seems when you focus on one type, they pop up everywhere. Or maybe there was a run on white subaru's recently and everyone bought one,

## FINALLY...

GROUP THERAPY FOR THE LACTOSE INTOLERANT!

Bob, would you like to tell the group about how you first discovered yourself to be...lactose intolerant?

I'm afraid to date anyone. My last boyfriend was really into dairy products.

My father was lactose intolerant. (\*sob\*) We never talked about it.

I'm NOT. My WIFE made me come here.

I grew up in Wisconsin. Our lives revolved around milk.



LEAH 3/91

except me. I don't know, strange things have happened. Anyhow, I wrote a stupid poem about a stupid crush on a not so stupid guy I used to know. I was wondering if your story was autobiographical, at least in part. Was it? Well, this poem I kind of wrote as a joke and maybe you'll get a chuckle out of it.

Nice paper, I like it. Oh, this poem, or whatever it is, isn't something for publication—it's just silliness I thought I'd share with you

Laura Brown  
East Longmeadow

Just lately had I been thinking of you  
I'd write you down a poem  
But since of-course that can't be true  
I wrote this song for no one  
Funny thing but cars these days  
They all seem much like yours  
And though my heart seems open now  
It's locked behind forced doors  
Long since I've forgotten you  
And past your magic spell  
I travel on my way these days  
Carrying on quite well  
So since I never think of you  
This poem never written  
No one gets the wrong idea  
That with you I might be smitten.

P.S. Why in hell would you want to be anything like Hemingway?

Dear Editor,

It is only the artist, not the theoretician,

who can stop the flow of blood.

Pete Shwartz  
Stockbridge

SALINGER

Will,

Thoroughly enjoyed the three issues of Perkins Press, particularly yours and Leah's stories. Tell Leah I would have pegged her for a Salinger disciple anywhere. She may not like it, but ...

As much as I appreciated your story Crush, I felt the pain ooze out of it, that which I know like the back of my hand.

Enjoyed,  
C.F.Roberts  
Nashua, New Hampshire

Dear Sir or Madam

Au sujet de Leah Ryan's last, a friend of mine actually visited J.D. Salinger in recent years, and tells me he's about as weird, bearded and paranoid as you might expect, but not an ungracious host. As he seems to prefer his solitude, and as little can be gleaned by visiting, I do not recommend a pilgrimage. And I speak as one who actually owns both "The Boy Allies on the Somme" and "Bolts of Melody," but keeps them as far away from each other as my bookcase allows.

Love, or what you will,  
Scopulus Tintinnabuli,  
Northampton

YELLOW RIBBON

Dear Editor,

Just a small addenda to the story that "Brenda Starr," whom I have a sneaking suspicion is a pseudonym for someone I used to go out with, contributed in the May 1991 issue. I was on the same bus, and these are just a few of the things I heard:

"I think Quayle is a hologram ...how could anyone without a lifeforce exist for 35 or 40 years?"

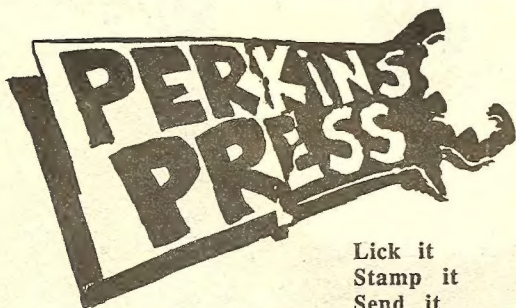
"Leon," the bus driver (jokingly, just before handing the mike to a bus coordination volunteer who had come on to make an announcement): "Nuke the White House!"

Leon, complaining about the pre-emption of regular broadcasting due to network news coverage of the conflict: "At least Reagan used to wait until after 'All My Children.'"

(As we approached our destination and could see the famous Washington Monument) "The great American phallus."

Just thought you'd like to know,  
Tom Cage  
Also a pseudonym  
Northampton.

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**WE WILL**

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YOU**